

WE ASK, THEY ANSWER

THE MAD HATTER'S BOX



**RITA ANN HIGGINS**  
POET & DRAMATIST

**Who would be the last person you would invite to your birthday party?**  
A bad hugger.

**Who would be the first person you would invite to your birthday party?**  
A good hugger.

**Favourite saying?**  
"Go mbeirimíd beo ar an am seo arís" (That we may be alive this time next year).

**Favourite record?**  
*Purple Rain* by Prince and The Revolution.

**Favourite book?**  
*Sons and Lovers* by D.H. Lawrence.

**Favourite author?**  
Dostoyevsky. He brings you into the

novel like no one else can.

**Favourite film?**  
*Rear View Window*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

**Favourite actor/actress?**  
Ashley Judd.

**Favourite musician?**  
Bono is a good lad, and that's the greatest compliment I can pay him in a kind of parental way. Also he's a lovely singer.

**Most embarrassing moment of your life?**  
Some years ago I was invited to sign copies of one of my poetry books in Eason's in Galway and no one turned up.

Then an hour later my sister-in-law came in and bought two copies. I don't know which was worse.

**Favourite food/drink/stimulant?**  
I love breakfast, I love porridge with cinnamon and blueberries and strawberries. Then tea, juice and gluten-free toast. I look forward to it every day. Saddo, I'd say.

**Favourite TV programme?**  
*Frasier* is my favourite programme, I try to watch two episodes a day if possible. If I've been writing all day, I come downstairs and watch it on the comedy channel from 5 to 6pm.

**Favourite TV personality?**  
Niles from *FRASIER*.

**Favourite item of clothing?**  
My little denim jacket. I have it forever. I don't always wear it but it travels with me.

**Most desirable date?**  
To do Irish grammar with Daniel Craig in the back of a Hillman Imp. Me teaching him the módh coinníolach (conditional tense). My daughter Heather and I met him once. He was going into a lift with his bodyguard in a London hotel. He said 'hello' to us and we just stood there like idiots drooling. We talked about it all day. One 'hello' from Daniel and we were speechless.

**Favourite method of relaxation?**  
Walking the bog with Christy, and then a double episode of *FRASIER*.

**If you weren't pursuing your present career, what other career might you have chosen?**  
I'd love to have been a drummer. Beating drums is such a primal thing.

**Biggest thrill?**  
Going under Niagara Falls in a tourist boat with Christy.

**Biggest disappointment?**  
That none of my siblings attended my book launch in the town hall recently.

**Your concept of heaven?**  
Singing Irish nursery rhymes with my grandson Óisín.

**Your concept of hell?**  
Dealing with anyone who is passive aggressive.

**What would be your dying words?**  
"Go mbeirimíd beo ar an am seo arís" (That we may be alive this time next year)

**Greatest ambition?**  
To dream in Irish.

**Period of history you'd most like to have lived in and why?**  
The Easter Rising and that period. I love courage in a person and in a nation. They were courageous men and women.

**If you weren't a human being, which animal would you have chosen to be?**  
A heron. When I see them standing there so still by the shore I always think they represent a deceased loved one. They epitomise serenity.

**If you were told that the world was ending tomorrow morning, how would you react/what would you do?**  
I'd walk on the lines.

**Your nominee for the world's best-dressed person?**  
Cheryl Cole is a fairly snazzy dresser. Of course she is beautiful to begin with, so a sack would look good on her.

**Favourite term of abuse?**  
'Ya cancery stuttering cross-breedin' bastard ya.' (I heard a traveller woman we knew and loved say it to her husband once). Later they were both killed in a car accident. I dedicated a book to their memory.

**Biggest fear?**  
Not being able to face fear.

**Humanity's most useful invention?**  
The spell check. I'm a bad speller and I'd be totally lost without it.

**Humanity's most useless invention?**  
The spider catcher, because I've never seen it in any shop.

Rita Ann Higgins' new poetry collection *Hurting God* is published by Salmon Publishing

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